

THE HOWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM
10910 Clarksville Pike
Ellicott City, MD 21042

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Deputy Superintendent

Public Information Act Requests

To: All Staff
From: Linda T. Wise
Deputy Superintendent

The HCPSS Public Information Office is responsible for, and has established procedures for recording and responding to all Maryland Public Information Act (MPIA) requests. Any HCPSS employee who receives an email request marked PIA, MPIA and/or FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) should immediately forward the email to pia_requests@hcpss.org. Any paper copies should be immediately sent to Emily Bahhar in the HCPSS Public Information Office.

The MPIA has strict and short deadlines that must be followed for every request. It is essential that employees coordinate with Public Information promptly to respond to all such requests.

The MPIA grants the public a broad right of access to records that are in the possession of state and local government agencies, including public school systems. The basic mandate of the MPIA is to enable people to have access to public records unless the requested records fall within one of the exceptions in the statute, including but not limited to personnel records, student records and medical records.

The scope of the MPIA is broad, and most records possessed by HCPSS employees fall within the MPIA definition of a "public record." All employees should be aware that email sent to and from an HCPSS email account is subject to be requested under the MPIA. Emails given to a requester as part of a MPIA request will be redacted to remove any exempt information, such as names of students, identifiable information, medical records, etc. Also subject to the MPIA are paper and/or electronic meeting notes, files, and other such documents.

Helpful resources:

- MPIA, https://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/PIA_manual_printable.pdf
- HCPSS PIA information, <http://www.hcpss.org/about-us/public-information-requests/>
- HCPSS Policy 3040 Technology Security, <http://www.hcpss.org/f/board/policies/3040.pdf>
- HCPSS Policy 8080 Responsible Use of Technology and Social Media, <http://www.hcpss.org/f/board/policies/8080.pdf>

Any questions should be directed to the Office of Public Information, x6682 or publicinfo@hcpss.org.

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